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AUTHOR Gaudart, Hyacinth
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ABSTRACT

A study investigated the use of drama activities in English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) instruction in Malaysia. Instruction occurred over an extended period of time and involved over 300 teachers, with a wide range of training and experience, in secondary and higher education institutions. Students were low-level, intermediate, or advanced learners in rural, urban, or tertiary schools. Class size ranged from 10 to 51 students. Types of drama activities used were language games (including improvisation), pantomime, role playing, and simulations. They emphasized listening and speaking skills. In general, it was found that drama techniques worked for most teachers and that some techniques worked better in certain circumstances than in others. Activities that do not emphasize performance were found more universally applicable than those that do. Some variability was found in the success of different activity types with different ability and school groups. It is concluded that drama activities are useful in motivating students, holding their attention, and stimulating their creativity. However, student proficiency, needs, attitudes, experience, abilities, age, and interests must be considered. Some teachers find integrating drama activities to be difficult; convincing and training teachers in their use is essential to success. (MSE)

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USING DRAMA TECHNIQUES IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

HYACINTH GAUDERT

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USING DRAMA TECHNIQUES IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

Hyacinth Gaudart

One has only to mention the word "Drama" and a vision of some stage production is raised. Mention "Drama" in language teaching and the vision of the stage production is transported into the domain of the language teacher who is then seen as putting on a stage production of some kind. To many teachers, the terms "drama" and "theatre" are synonymous. This concept has deterred the spread of the use of drama techniques in language teaching in Malaysia. Whenever the techniques are discussed, they are discussed among the initiated or those who would like to be initiated. The majority dismiss the techniques out of hand, feeling that they know what drama in language teaching is all about. Their assumption is that they will be taught how to put on a play and at that point they stop reading or listening.

It does not help that there are varying ideas as to the scope of drama, drama in education and drama in language education. The teacher can never be certain, therefore, which approach he or she will be faced with.

WHAT DRAMA TECHNIQUES IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION ARE

It is extremely difficult to define drama techniques in language teaching. Watkins (1981) says that there exists no universally accepted idea of what drama is or what its purpose is in education. Accordingly to Holden (1981: 1), however, "drama applies to any activity which asks the student to portray himself in an imaginary situation; or to portray another person in an imaginary situation."

It is easier, in fact, to say what drama in language teaching is not. It is certainly not theatre. Theatre, implies performance. It is largely concerned with communication between the actors and their audience. One could go so far as to say that theatre is dependent on an audience. In Britain, in the 1950's and 60's, a distinction was made between drama in education and theatre activities. The developmental aspect of drama was stressed and emphasis was given as to how drama could be used to increase awareness, self-expression and creativity (Slade, 1967 and Way, 1967). Maley (1983) says that:

> drama is more concerned with what is happening within and between members of a group placed in a dramatic situation. It is never intended for performance and rarely if ever rehearsed, since it depends on the spontaneous inventions and reactions of people involved in it ...drama involves the participants themselves.

Because theatre is a performance genre, it becomes inaccessible to a large portion of Malaysian society. It is important, therefore, that drama techniques for language teaching are not confused with "theatre".

In the context of this paper, drama techniques in ESL focus on doing, not presentation. The techniques provide learners with an atmosphere which enables them to get out of themselves and into situations and roles, which, in turn, allows them to practise the target language in meaningful contexts.

The techniques are largely problem-solving activities of various sorts. The students may or may not "show" their scenes to the rest of the class. The presentation, if any, is secondary to the preparatory work the students have put in.

THE EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF DRAMA ACTIVITIES

A review of the literature on drama in education would reveal its preoccupation with psycho-social aspect of the value of drama and their application in monolingual education systems. McGregor (1976), for example, offers two aspects of educational drama. The first, she calls, "learning through drama". This involves the exploration of issues and people through drama. The second aspect "envisages drama as an art form in its own right." Students are given a stimulus by the teacher and the students produce ideas and decide how to put them together and create a scene, with its own characters and situations, which is meaningful to them and sometimes to others. For McGregor, the value lies in the creative process and also the experience of working with other people.

In the teaching of ESL/EFL in Malaysia, this cannot be an end in itself. Inevitably, teachers will ask, "What area of the syllabus will this teach?" The advocate of drama techniques must be able to answer that demand. In teacher training, there is a need to show teachers how these techniques will fit into an overall plan, into their curriculum, and even more than that, show how these techniques can answer their needs effectively. It has not been enough, therefore, that Mrs X can use drama techniques effectively. What has been more necessary has been to discover what activities would work more universally than others, what teacher and pupil variables contribute to the success or lack of success of the activities and what adjustments could be made to make the techniques more universally applicable. We who are interested in ***language*** education, need to

consider the pedagogical and linguistic aspects of using drama techniques in the language classroom.

USING DRAMA TECHNIQUES IN THE ESL/EFL CLASSROOM

To try and consider these pedagogical and linguistic issues, research was begun in 1978, involving more than 300 secondary and tertiary teachers, some in a one-off observation, others in continuous observations over a number of years. The results of the research are based on observations by the researcher as well as self-reports by teachers and pupils.

THE TEACHERS

The teacher-subjects have ranged in experience and abilities. They may be categorised into the following:

(a) teacher trainees with minimal classroom experience
(b) teacher trainees from inservice programmes with less than five years of teaching experiences
(c) teacher trainees from inservice programmes with more than five years of teaching experience.
(d) secondary school teachers who were first introduced to the techniques in pre-service teacher training and are currently using the techniques in secondary schools.
(e) tertiary level teachers.

Of the five categories, categories (d) and (e) were the most confident and convinced about the use of drama techniques in their classes. They did not use the techniques as much as they wanted to, however, for various reasons. The major problem was the fear that the institutional authorities would not approve of what they were doing. Both the tertiary and secondary teachers in the study were able to devise activities to suit the different abilities of students in the various classes they taught and were also able to create activities to suit the interest of their students.

The teacher trainees from inservice programmes varied in their acceptance of the techniques.

(i) Those with more than five years of teaching experience were generally less willing to apply the techniques in their classes, dismissing them as unworka-

ble. The exceptions are five teachers who are attempting these activities on "hot afternoons".

(ii) Those with less than five years experience, on the other hand, were more willing to try. They report different degrees of success.

As it has not yet been possible for the researcher to conduct observations of the classes of this group of teachers, the data gathered by these teachers have been set aside for purposes of this paper.

Where the teacher trainees with minimal teaching experience are concerned, some were better teachers than others. As such, the data gathered from these subjects will be treated separately from that gathered by experienced teachers.

THE STUDENTS

The student-subjects may be divided into those in lower secondary schools, upper secondary schools and tertiary institutions. They were further subdivided as follows:

(a) advanced learners in schools
(b) advanced learners at tertiary institutions
(c) intermediate learners in schools in urban areas
(d) intermediate learners in schools in rural areas
(e) intermediate learners at tertiary institutions
(f) low-level learners in schools in urban areas
(g) low-level learners in schools in rural areas
(h) low-level learners in tertiary instutions.

The classes at tertiary level ranged from 10 to 30 students. The minimum class size at secondary level was 35 and the largest 51. The average secondary class size was 43.

The learners varied in social background, attitudes towards English and attitudes towards their teacher. In some schools, for example, learners were in English classes because they were forced to be there. In other schools, students were highly motivated to acquire so that they could study abroad. In yet other schools, students studied English but had no idea why they were studying English or when they would ever use English once they left school. Such situations played a great part in determining the success or otherwise of drama techniques. Learners with intrinsic motivation accepted the techniques whole-heartedly. However, although the vast majority of those with extrinsic motivation accepted the techniques, there were some who felt they were having too much fun for

them to be learning very much.

On sub-categorising the learners according to sex, it was found that it was easier to use drama techniques in single-sex schools than in coeducational schools, and the easiest of all in single sex girls schools. In girls' schools, while one or two girls were reluctant, the large majority entered into the activities with a great deal of enthusiasm. In boys' schools, while some boys seized the opportunity to become as rowdy as possible, others really put their best effort into all activities. In coeducational schools, however, reactions varied. In urban schools, more girls were reluctant to volunteer for activities which implied any sort of performance and were generally more subdued than girls in all-girls' schools. The boys in coed schools, however, were easier to organise than boys in single sex schools. They were more submissive. However, there were also "shy" boys in coeducational schools. There appeared to be none in the boys' schools in the study.

It should be pointed out, however, that the single sex schools are also the premier schools in the country. How much the schools climate has contributed to this situation is difficult to ascertain.

TYPES OF DRAMA ACTIVITIES

In training teachers to use the techniques in their classes, certain types of drama techniques have been given emphasis. The research thus looked at the success of each of the following:

1. Language games (including improvisations)
2. Mime
3. Role play
4. Simulations.

These were related to the four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing, with greater emphasis on listening and speaking. It should be pointed out that the sub-divisions are purely administrative because overlapping takes place. It has not been important for teachers to distinguish among the types of drama techniques. Such distinctions have been more for the researcher's reference than for the teachers'.

LANGUAGE GAMES

The games ranged from structured language practice (like using a pack of cards eg "Happy Families" to practise making and receiving phone calls or to

introduce themselves to one another) to less structured activities which sometimes border on improvisation.

An example of a "warm-up" drama used in class is "Circles of Fun" (Gaudart, 1979) in which students are placed in groups of eight or ten. They sit around in a circle, holding hands, legs straight in front of them. They have to rise to their feet without bending their knees and without releasing their hands. How they go about it is up to them.

Generally, language games are based on observation (memory), interpretation (guessing) and individual/group interaction. Most "games" are based on exercises used in drama training, usually for relaxation and warm up.

From the research it was found that, unless the games were of the structured kind, teachers were less willing to use them in their classes. Observations indicated that the less structured games allowed students the easiest switch to their mother-tongue or Bahasa Malaysia. Even in upper-intermediate and advanced classes, when the game got exciting, student switch out of English. The exceptions were two schools where the large majority of pupils used English as their home language or one of their home languages.

Unstructured game also demanded very minimal teacher control. To a casual observer (like an authority figure) it would indeed seem that the class was out of control. This gave teachers the added pressure to convince the uninitiated that the class was indeed under their guidance and that the apparent disorder was in fact in order. Thus, although students reported having enjoyed the lessons, teachers were reluctant to use the activities again in class. Instead, unstructured games were relegated to meetings of the English Club.

MIME

To the language teacher, one could generally say that mime is acting out an idea or story through gesture, bodily movement and expression, without using words. This may seem strange in a language classroom. Why advocate a technique that does not require students to speak? But educational technology is full of audio-visual aids which just as silent until they are used to prompt language. Savignon (1983: 207) says that the mime helps learners become comfortable with the idea of performing in front of peers without concern for language and that although no language is used during a mime, it can be a spur to use language. John Doughill (1987: 13) supports this when he says that not only is mime one of the most useful activities for language practice, it is also one of the most potent and relatively undemanding. Its strength lies in that although no language is used during the mime, the mime itself can act as a catalyst to generate and elicit language before, during and after the activity.

Mime activities can be carried out individually or in groups. A story or

newspaper article could be read and then mimed. Alternatively, students could listen to an account and then mime what they hear. For example, a simple story could be planned and executed by the students in a mime. Possibilities for follow up language work are then tremendous. Questioning techniques could be practised, explanations of particular events given, or the story could be related or written out. Melville, Langenheim, Spaventa and Rinvolucri (1980) suggest a number of ways in which grammar could be taught through mime. They suggest tense drills through mime, questions through mime, teaching prepositions and phrasal verbs through mime. They also suggest ways of using the mime form to stimulate oral narrative work. In an English language classroom where literature and drama are incorporated as components of the subject and are integrated for classroom activities, the mime can take the form of improvisation of literary work. The possibilities go on.

It would be incorrected, however, to over-estimate the use of mime. Long and Castanos (1976: 236) warn us that "mime clearly has its limitations in the communication of many language items and should not be relied upon for teaching them." Certainly it should not be the sole teaching technique used to teach any language item.

There have been three main ways in which thespians say the mime can be used in the classroom. The first way requires learners to imagine themselves in a certain physical environment and then act in mime as though they are. The second way is the formal mime which involves more precise formalized movements. The third type is done in groups. Different parts of the body and space are explored and personal relationships are built through physical contact. It has been found that the latter two ways are less possible in a Malaysian context. The stylised mime may be used as a drama club activity but is less acceptable in the context of the classroom as time is spent on physical training rather the job in hand. Some pundits would say that because the teacher is using the second/foreign language for the activity, students are being exposed to the language. Teachers, however, need a more convincing argument than that. Teachers want a teaching point to justify the use of the activity and acquiring English incidentally is not one of them.

In the third type of activity, physical contact goes against cultural norms in most Malaysian schools and even causes discipline problems in some. A course on using drama activities, therefore, has to give students a context for this form of mime and movement. For example, students could be asked to be parts of a machine and have to interact together to create that machine. Single sex groups are optional and how much physical contact takes place is totally up to each group.

The problem with the mime form is that it is difficult to remove the "performance" aspect form it entirely. That may be a stumbling block. Students who are quite happy to watch a mime may not be as willing to perform. The teacher

has to be sensitive to these students and plan activities so that there is a way out for these students not to perform, for the teacher not to have to insist that they perform, and yet encourage those who might like to perform but need that final push to do so.

Among forty trainee teachers who tried out the mime form in their classes, for example, five student teachers reported a lack of or limited success with using the technique in their classes. All five appeared to have insisted that students perform when the students were reluctant to. Here are some of their comments:

(1) It was not successful. They didn't know how to act. I had to demonstrate first but still the pupils were too afraid and shy to act. Only the last two groups were good.
(2) Even after prior explanation and discussion they were still shy of acting the mime. The amount of time taken just to cajole them into acting gave me little time for the followup activity which was for them to describe the mime.
(3) The students made a lot of noise. They were reluctant to come out and act.
(4) Was it successful? Yes and no. "Yes" because they finally did actually come out to the front for the class) and did something. But it was minimal. So I would also say "No" because there was not much action.
(5) Some of the students enjoyed this activity. They were eager to act and mimed out the story well. Other students (especially the girls) were more reluctant to carry out this activity.

Students four and five later reported better success when they designed activities which did not need each person to act. Instead, students were given the option to supply sound effects or be "props", like trees or rocks. In other activities, they would mime only to their own groups but not to the rest of the class. Sometimes, the teachers identified those who were eager to perform and those students performed for the class which then used the mime for the follow-up activities. Students 1, 2 and 3 could not design activities that students 4 and 5 did. They reported consistent failure. When given a lesson plan which had been successful in an almost similar class, they found limited success with it.

In my observations of their classes as they tried out the lesson plan given to them, I found their learners tolerant rather than enthusiastic. They had had so many mime activities by then that, as one student said, "Aiyah! Again, ah, Boring, lah."

There is the danger then of overkill, especially if the teacher cannot create activities which stimulate rather than traumatise. Students 1, 2 and 3 were "borderline pass" cases for their practical teaching. Their marks were, in fact, among the lowest five in the class of ninety. The question one could ask is

whether such teachers should only keep to a coursebook. Would their learners be better off not doing mime activities with these teachers? We cannot answer that question at this stage.

ROLE PLAY

Role play is possibly the most familiar to teachers, and therefore the most acceptable of the drama techniques. Research indicates, however, that teachers' interpretation of role play varies. The most common form of "role play" is to select a dialogue, often an extract for listening comprehension, assign parts to the students and get them to read the dialogue aloud with the teacher correcting pronunciation errors. In training and retraining teachers, we have attempted to move them away from this "model" and teach them to create situations which would give rise to more spontaneous speech.

There are many types of role play: dramatic plays, story dramatization and sociodrama, seminar style presentations, debates and interviews. They range from beginners' role play for weaker students to advanced role plays for the more proficient students in the ESL classes. At lower levels, for example, students, working in pairs may be asked to greet each other, or invite the other person for some occasion. At a higher level, the invitation can be of increased difficulty when one student is asked to persuade the other person to attend an occasion but the other person is very reluctant to do so. At an even higher level, students, working in groups, are given pictures of people. They are assigned roles, each student playing the role of someone in the picture. They are given a few minutes to decide what the person is like. They then act out what is happening in the picture, what the people are saying, how they are behaving and so on. The next challenge can come when the teacher changes the situation. For example, the picture shows a street scene. The teacher, after about ten minutes of the first role play, changes the scene. "You are now attending a party," she tells them. "So-and-so is the host. How will you behave now?" Different types of role play demand different approaches. The way the role play is introduced, the description of the roles, the facilitation and debriefing sessions vary accordingly.

Teachers often feel that a great deal of preparation is required from the teacher because the students must be given clear guidelines as to how to carry out the role play. Although this is true, the same could be said for any classroom activity which is not tied to a coursebook. The presentation needed for a role-play activity is not much more than for other non-coursebook activities.

Another objection which has been expressed is that role play is too emotionally demanding because the task is performed in front of others. Contrary to this belief, however, role play does not automatically mean that the task has to be *performed* in front of others. In the pairwork activity described earlier, for

example, when students greet each other, they are not "performing" for the other person. The whole class could be working in pairs at the same time so no one is "*performing* for anyone else. The question of the task being emotionally demanding therefore does not arise. It is important, in fact, not only for role play but for all drama activities in the classroom, that there is no audience.

Our teachers are reminded, therefore, that at all times, they need to keep in mind that they are language teachers. They are not psychiatrists or psychologists or directors of stage companies. The role-play activities they choose should be relevant to the *language* needs of their students. Students' emotional needs are best left to other experts.

As in the case of other drama activities, however, we cannot over-estimate the importance of role play as a teaching technique. One claim which has often been made for role play and other drama activities, for example, is that it allows students to practise paralinguistic communication. Such practice is possible only if two variables are present:

(i) that the teacher knows the "correct" gesture in the target language and
(ii) that students have been taught the gestures.

There are two communication acts, for example, which have posed real problems for learners:

(i) the hand gesture asking/indicating/requiring someone to approach the initiator of the communication act.
In Malaysia, it is rude to gesture with one's finger. The whole hand is used, palm downwards. This, in British and American culture is a leave-taking signal.
(ii) uh-uh.
In Malay culture, this is an agreement signal. In American culture, this is a disagreement signal.
We have found that knowledge of the difference in speech acts has not been sufficient to deter students from using their own cultural forms in role play and simulation.

SIMULATION

Jones (1980: 4) calls a simulation a case study where learners become participants in an event and shape the course of the event. The learners have roles, functions, duties, and responsibilities within a structure situation involving problem solving. A proper simulation does not encourage a teacher to control the behaviour of his or her learners. It is, in fact, dependent on what each partici-

pant contributes to the situation in the form of skills, experience and knowledge.

A clear line cannot be drawn between role play and simulation. These two drama activities overlap. Role play is frequently used within simulations. In role-simulation, the participant remains the same individual while reacting to a task that has been simulated on the basis of his own personal or professional experience. In language teaching, the differences between role play and simulations are not that important. As Livingston (1983: 1) pointed out, "the main concern for the language teacher is the opportunities role play and simulations provide."

The function of a simulation is to give participants the opportunity to practise taking on specific roles and improvising within specific situations on the assumption that with practice the participants will play their roles more effectively when situations involving similar skills occur in real life. A simulation activity provides a specific situation within which students can practise various communication skills like asserting oneself, expressing opinions, convincing others, arguing eliciting opinions, group-problem solving, analysing situations and so on (Smith, 1984). Using given details of the relevant aspects of a situation, participants have to make decisions or come to some agreement or resolve a problem, thus meeting a challenge posed by the simulated situation.

Role play and simulations have long been used as a form of training in the professional field, but it was only in the 60's that simulations became more acceptable in classrooms. It was even later that their value as effective devices for facilitating communication practice in the foreign language classroom was formally recognised.

In ESP classes, simulations are particularly useful in practising and evaluating the use of procedures and language (vocabulary and structures) specific to particular skills. For example, tertiary level law and syariah students have benefitted from simulations of court room trials, while business students have enjoyed participating in meetings of various sorts. Thus a marriage of the original role of simulation as a training device in the professional arena and of its new found role as a language and communication generator are allowed to merge to bring about successful language learning. The relevancy of the activities to student needs are immediately apparent to the learner, motivating him to participate more fully in the speech acts and events simulated.

Simulations in ESL classrooms in schools can involve the students in making decisions or negotiating with one another. They can be in the form of any problem-solving activity based on any area relevant to the ESL students. They could also arise out of well-used teaching materials like maps, cartoons, diagrams, recorded interviews, newspaper and magazine extracts and so on, as well as less used teaching materials like items found freely in the environment - leaves, sticks, stones and so on.

Role play and simulations differ from traditional dialogue drills in that

students are encouraged to develop genuine conversational skills. They are required to listen carefully and then choose possible responses rather than repeat what has been written for them.

Butler (1977) incorporated, as part of her evaluation, simulation exercises which explored attitudes and promoted language awareness. Results indicated that students participating were involved and interested, gained awareness were required to be highly observant, were able to communicate and were indeed motivated to express themselves.

ESL research in simulation or role-simulation is generally silent. Besides defining and describing modes of simulation as a dramatic technique beneficial to learning, and suggesting examples of this, most pundits do not present evidence of any research to back their claims as to the suitability of role-play and simulations.

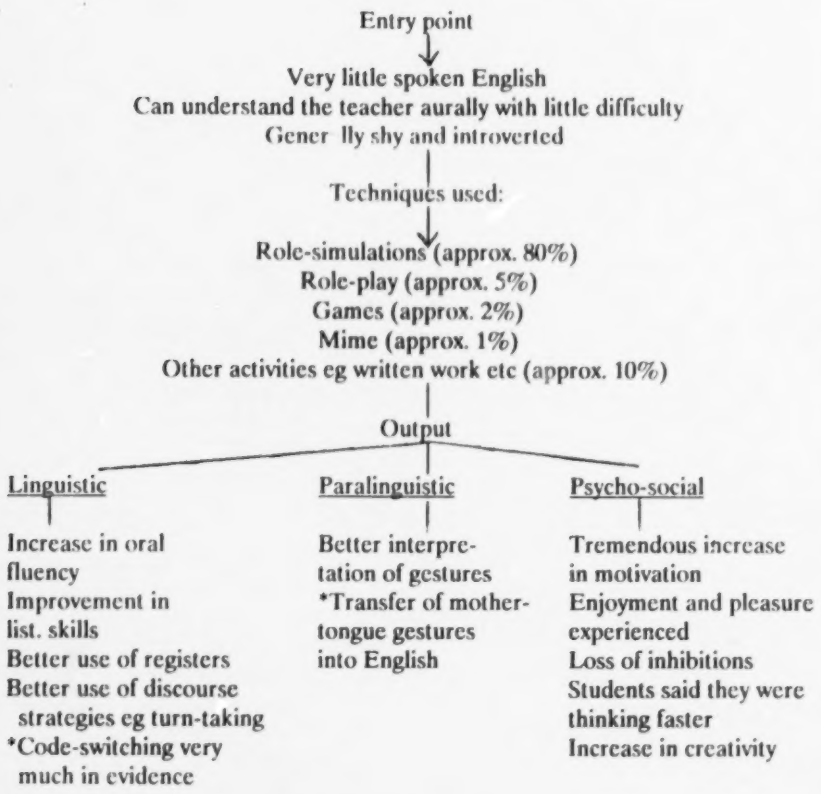
This has been true, to some extent, of this research too because it is difficult to isolate the variable and say that simulation is more or less effective than any other technique. There are three teachers in the project, however, who prefer using role-simulation to other techniques and indeed use it more than 50% of the time in their classes. These three case studies involve Form Four (Grade 11 or sixteen years old) students in secondary schools in Malaysia. All three teachers teach in single sex schools in small towns. The students are intermediate and advanced level learners of English. Some of the students are from village but room in school hostels in the towns and go back to the villages about once a month.

In all three case studies, the teachers report success in oral skills after using simulation activities for a year. Fig. 1 shows the progress made:

Where pedagogy was concerned, however, it was apparent that the teachers had put in a great deal of thought into making the simulations relevant and exciting. In the three case studies, the pedagogical problems reported were:

* the teacher needed to be creative
* fear that the administrative might feel that the teacher had lost control of the class
* there was a great deal of noise generated which did disturb the other classes
* it was difficult to get some of the pupils involved in the tasks and conversely,
* some pupils dominated the activities.

Figure 1



* Considered by teachers to be negative output

Besides these case studies, a number of one-off simulation activities have been reported by teachers at secondary and tertiary levels. All of them report the same problems. It is interesting, however, that in the case studies, the teachers found that after a few weeks, the behaviour of pupils changed. The problems decreased as the year went on. A positive note is that in both the one-off reports and the case studies, except for low-level secondary school students, pupil enjoyment and, through that, motivation, increased tremendously. Teachers report that pupils who had expressed boredom with their lessons said that they looked forward to their English classes.

SUCCESS AND PROBLEMS OF THE DRAMA TECHNIQUE

In general, we can say that drama techniques have worked for most teachers. Some techniques have worked better in certain circumstances than in others. The variables have been teacher competence and experience, linguistic competence of the pupils and the social setting. Drama activities which do not emphasise performance are more universally applicable then those which do.

A survey of attempts at various activities indicates that advanced students at tertiary, upper secondary and lower secondary levels generally enjoyed language games, mime, role-play and simulation. Intermediate level urban students in lower and upper secondary schools also enjoyed and found those activities useful. While rural intermediate level students in lower secondary classes entered into the activities whole-heartedly, however, it was difficult to enthuse upper secondary intermediate level rural students in role play. They were more open to language games, simulation and the mime form. Tertiary level intermediate students, on the other hand, enjoyed role play and simulation activities but considered mime activities "acting" rather than language learning and felt that the games were not very useful for them.

Role-play and simulation were also successful with low-level tertiary students. These students also enjoyed the language games and mime activities. Low level lower secondary rural and urban students also enjoyed language games and mime activities, even though pedagogically, the urban lower secondary pupils appeared the most difficult to organise and keep in order.

Table 1

Willingness of Learners to Carry Out Drama Activities

	Advanced	Intermediate					Low Level Learners				
	All	Urban LS	Urban US	Rural LS	Rural US	Ter.	Urban LS	Urban US	Rural LS	Rural US	Ter.
Games	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
Mime	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Role-play	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Simulation	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y

Table 2

Ability of Learners to Carry Out Drama Activities

	Advanced	Intermediate					Low Level Learners				
	All	Urban LS	Urban US	Rural LS	Rural US	Ter.	Urban LS	Urban US	Rural LS	Rural US	Ter.
Games	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
Mime	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Role-play	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Simulation	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Y

Not so with upper secondary students. Upper secondary, low-level rural students participated more fully in mime and role play activities than in language games and simulation. None of the activities were successful with urban upper secondary low-level students, even though their teachers felt that they had enough language to at least attempt the mime and role play. The girls remained reluctant and the boys disrupted not only their own class but other classes too.

While the low-level tertiary students attempted to use English all the time in their classes, the low level upper secondary students used English about half the time in role-play activities and no English at all in the other activities. The low level lower secondary students attempted to use English most of the time in role-play activities and some of the time in the other activities. They had problems carrying out the simulations to the teachers' satisfaction, however. Teachers felt that too much code switching took place in the simulation activities. Although the teachers felt that the learners were able to carry out role-play activities, they had to be guided in their attempts.

In sum, therefore, one could say that drama activities were less successful with upper secondary school low level learners than with the other learners. This may not necessary mean failure for drama techniques or the application of them, however, but might be due to other problems not peculiar to English. In two schools where students were "streamed" according to ability, for example, these low level learners of English were also considered "low level" in all other subjects. They were also disruptive in their other classes.

USE OF DRAMA TECHNIQUES

Teachers have used drama activities to introduce and conclude lessons and have found that using a drama activity as a set induction has caught and held the attention of the students and stimulated their creativity. ESL lessons became less monotonous.

The activities were also used as a follow up to the teaching of particular language forms and functions and provided practice for students. It was found that not only was the language reviewed and consolidated, but that the activities stimulated other language forms as well and also motivated the students.

This motivation factor is important in Malaysia as many students have no idea why they are studying English. Most of them do so because the Ministry of Education has decreed that they do so (Gaudart, 1985). The drama activities have added relevance, variety, excitement and fun to the ESL classroom. They have provided a change from the traditional classroom arrangement and allowed students to be totally involved in the task.

This has also meant that the role of the teacher has changed. The class is more of a learner-centred than a teacher-centred one. The teacher is merely the facilitator. Although this concept of the teacher as "mere" facilitator, is not new in ESL, the pedagogical applications of this concept in the Malaysian classroom has not been easy for many Malaysian teachers to accept fully. The teacher who uses drama techniques has to pay more than lip service to the concept. To create a conducive atmosphere which relaxed and informal, s/he will not only have to willingly accept the idea of a learner-centred classroom but advocate it as well to his or her learners.

Some teachers have therefore expressed their reservations regarding the use of drama techniques for language teaching. Their main complaint has been that the teacher "loses control" of the class, not only over what is learnt and the order that it should be learnt, but also over class discipline. In a number of classes, the students got so carried away that they became noisy and disruptive. This problem of noise level has been further aggravated by class size and thin/missing classroom walls.

In some cases, teachers are afraid that drama techniques would be regarded as too entertaining or frivolous. The ESL students would then not take the lesson seriously. They would merely enjoy the lesson but at the end of the lesson, complain that they had learnt nothing. Students might fail to see the objective behind each activity.[1]

Cohen and Manion (1985) suggest simulations as a means of assessing work. Interestingly, none of the teachers reported using any of the drama techniques for assessment purposes. There are two possible explanations for this:

(i) it could be the fault of the researcher who did no emphasise this use to the

teachers, or,

(ii) it could be the influence of the examination system which lays greater emphasis on written products for testing. Teachers then begin to think in terms of monthly tests and end-of-term tests which are mini replications of the public examinations.

THE FINAL WORD

It is true that when planning a lesson using drama techniques, it is important that the learners' level of proficiency, needs, attitude, motivation, experience, abilities, personalities, age and interests be considered. Since this sort of planning should be true not only for drama activities but of all teacher-designed activities, it should not discourage teachers from attempting drama activities in the class. The teacher should, however, be clear as to what his or her role is and what his or her relationship is with the students. Will s/he be an observer, a consultant, or a facilitator? If s/he intends running a teacher-dominated classroom, then drama techniques are out. A warm relationship between teacher and students will go a long way towards the success of the activities. It should be emphasised, however, that this warm relationship is a two-way process. In a large class, if students refuse to meet the teacher halfway, the teacher, for self-survival, will be forced to seek alternative measures and resort to the traditional teacher-centred classroom.

Teachers who have reported success after using drama techniques over a long period of time, have not had it easy initially. Their students were not used to learner-centred classroom and some preferred teacher-centred classrooms. Some students became involved when they saw the rest of the class having fun while others sought to prevent their classmates having fun. When they did get involved in the activities, however, most students expressed their appreciation of their lessons and most of them demanded such lessons on a regular basis. Once this happened, the teachers reported that life for them was much more pleasant as students were motivated and cooperative. It became easier for them to organise activities. Their work, in fact, became lighter.

It was found, however, that not all teachers are able to use these techniques as their personality, world view and preconceptions about teaching persuaded them into a different style of teaching. Since their style of teaching had worked for some of them for years, it is difficult to see why they should be persuaded to change and no attempt was made to do so.

The results of the research, therefore, have as their main limitation the fact that only teachers who are convinced about the techniques continue to be involved in the research and they also happen to be those who, as student teachers, had done well in their course. They are therefore very competent and creative

and able to select relevant tasks for their students. How less competent teachers could be taught to approach the techniques is now under investigation.

The possibilities of using drama techniques as teaching techniques are limitless. The main problem is not in the techniques but in convincing teachers that drama techniques can usefully be used as teaching techniques. The idea that performance is required scares many teachers. "Drama" unfortunately then, has negative connotations for many teachers because of its tie to performance. This has prevented teachers from getting acquainted with the teaching techniques. They assumed that performance is required and are no longer interested. This has prevented the use of drama techniques in language teaching from extending over the country as widely as it should. For greater acceptability, therefore, the performance aspects will need to be deemphasised as much as possible in teacher education.

NOTE

1 *These fears were in fact justified when a few tertiary level students, during interviews, said that the lessons were fun but they had not learnt anything. They felt that such lessons should only be conducted once or twice a year.*

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